

# Office of Attorney General Terry Goddard



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Third Mendez-Cañez Brother Found Guilty on Drug Trafficking Charges**

(Phoenix, Ariz. – August 19, 2005) Attorney General Terry Goddard today announced the guilty verdict of Ernesto Mendez-Cañez, 36, for drug trafficking and other charges. This August 17 guilty verdict, delivered by a Pima County Superior Court jury, completes the prosecution of three brothers considered to be major drug and weapons offenders by federal and state authorities.

Mendez-Cañez, of Tucson, was indicted in 2004. The indictment included three of his four brothers and over 20 other individuals considered part of the Mendez-Cañez drug trafficking organization. This case follows a 2003 investigation by the Drug Enforcement Agency and Immigration and Customs Enforcement that resulted in the seizure of more than two tons of marijuana and over \$700,000 in cash.

Last year the Attorney General's Office convicted his brothers on related charges: Jorge Mendez-Cañez, 40, was sentenced in October 2004 to three and a half years in prison; Oscar Mendez-Cañez, 28, was sentenced in November 2004 to three and a half years in prison. A fourth brother, Luis Mendez-Cañez, remains a fugitive in Mexico.

Ernesto Mendez-Cañez faces between three to 12.5 years in prison. He will be sentenced by Pima County Superior Court Judge Howard Fell on September 20. Assistant Attorney General Kim Ortiz prosecuted this case.

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